

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 16 are pending in the present application as amended. Independent claims 1, 5, 12, and 13 have been amended. Additionally, dependent claims 7 and 15 have been amended to correct a minor error. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added to the application by the Amendment.

The Examiner has objected to claims 7 and 15 for the reason that such claims depend from canceled claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims to depend directly from independent claims 5 and 13, respectively.

The Examiner has now rejected the claims under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kan (U.S. Pat. No. 7,171,415). Applicants respectfully traverse the § 102(e) rejection insofar as it may be applied to the claims as amended.

As was previously pointed out, the claims of the present application recite a web server that can receive a search request from a searcher that is to be directed at the request of the searcher to more than just one search provider. Instead, the search request can be directed by the searcher to any one of a plurality of search providers, or can be directed by the searcher to more than one of the plurality of search providers. However, it is to be appreciated that each search provider operates based on a different interface, and thus is likely expecting to receive a search request in a particular format, likely expected to return search results in a particular format, and likely expected to have particular options.

The web server cannot and should not be expected to know the particular interface requirements of every search provider, especially if the search providers can change on a regular basis. Accordingly, a search framework is provided that is distinct from the web server and interposed between the web server and the search providers, and thus that manages the search providers that can service a search request at the web server. In particular, the search framework for each available search provider registers same and in doing so collects and maintains all necessary interfacing information, and also provides same to the web server as needed. Accordingly, the web server upon receiving a search request from a searcher for one or more of the search providers need only call the search framework with the search parameters, and then allow the search framework to properly format the search and the results based on interfacing information relevant to each search provider.

In particular, a search as received at a web server from a searcher specifies that such search is to be directed to one or more search providers, and the search framework detects same and determines a corresponding search method that is to be employed for each such service provider. The search framework then provides such search methods to the web server as a ‘ubiquitous’ search method for performing the search utilizing each such search method. That is to say, the ubiquitous search method is generic with regard to any of the search providers and the corresponding search methods thereof. More particularly, the ubiquitous search method is a single search method for the web server to employ, and such ubiquitous search method is understood by the search framework and can convert same to a search method relevant to each search provider that the searcher has directed to receive the search.

Upon a call from the web server to the ubiquitous search method, the search framework responds by performing the search on the selected search provider utilizing each corresponding search method. Thus, the search framework customizes the call based on each search provider that is to perform a search based on the corresponding received search, sends the customized call to the web server which then calls same upon the search framework. Such framework then executes the call by executing each corresponding (non-ubiquitous) search method.

At some point thereafter, the search framework receives a search result from each selected search provider in a response format corresponding to said selected search provider. In a similar manner, then, the search framework providing the received search result to the web server in a ubiquitous format. Here, too, the ubiquitous format is generic with regard to any of the search providers and the corresponding formats thereof. More particularly, the ubiquitous format is a single, common format that the web server can understand, and such ubiquitous search method is a result of the search framework converting the results from each search provider that the searcher has directed to receive the search to the ubiquitous or common format.

As should be understood, then, in the present invention as recited in the claims of the present application, the search framework is closely involved with all aspects of the call from the web server and can control and monitor same. More importantly, the complexities of dealing with the possibly heterogeneous searches provided by search providers are avoided by the web server, which instead merely issues a single call as a ubiquitous search method

that is employed to access all of the appropriate search providers in an appropriate manner, and that in response thereto receives a response in a single ubiquitous format. Thus, it should be clear from the claim as amended that the recited search framework as interposed between the web server and each search provider acts as the conduit through which all information passes between such web server and each such search provider.

The Kan reference also discloses a method and system for allowing providers to access search results from multiple dissimilar providers, each employing different search methods and result formats. Most relevant to the present invention as recited in the claims of the present application, Kan discloses at column 8, lines 10-34 that:

A consumer 140 may initiate a query in the network. In one embodiment, the query may be sent to a hub 100 nearest to the consumer 140. The hub 100 then determines one or more providers 120 of which the hub 100 is aware (e.g. that have registered with the hub 100) and that may be qualified to process the query. In one embodiment, a hub 100 may include a resolver 102 which may handle the determination of qualified providers 120. Metadata the hub 100 has on the providers 120, including the provider descriptions registered with the hub 100, may be used to determine the qualified provider(s) 120. The hub 100 then may send the query to the provider(s) 120 it has determined to be qualified. Each provider 120 that receives the query may process the received query and send one or more responses to the hub 100. The hub 100 may receive the responses and route them to the consumer 140 that initiated the query. In one embodiment, a hub 100 may include a router 104 that handles the routing of queries to providers 120 and the routing of responses to consumers 140. Thus, the distributed information discovery platform allows information providers 120 to publish a description of queries that they are willing to answer. Information consumers 140 can submit queries to the network, which routes each query to all interested providers 120.

Thus, and as is also shown in Figs. 1-4, the Kan reference does not disclose that a search framework or the like is interposed (i.e., positioned between) a web server and one or more search providers, as is recited in the claims, and thus acts as a conduit. Instead, the Kan reference employs a hub with a router that interconnects consumers and providers, and the hub has access to a resolver that accesses provider information corresponding to each provider. As a result, the Kan reference does not disclose that any web server calls to a search framework as a conduit, and that in response thereto the search framework itself is in contact with the search providers in the manner recited in the claims. Instead, the resolver is

off to the side and is only referenced by the Kan hub as a look-up service, after which the resolver is no longer involved in the search.

Additionally, the Kan system does not allow a searcher to search at particular search providers, as is at least implicit in the claims based on the recitation of “detecting a request to the web server for a search on” one or more particular search providers. Instead, and as the above passage discloses, in the Kan system a searcher (information consumer 140) submits queries to the network, which routes each query to all *interested* providers 120. That is to say, the providers 120 themselves choose whether to respond.

Moreover, the Kan reference does not disclose the use of any ubiquitous search method for a query or ubiquitous format for query results that is employed by a centralized search framework, as is required by the claims of the present application. Instead, and as shown in Fig. 4, each Kan provider has its own interface 122 that presumptively can translate queries and provide search results. Thus, Kan not only does not disclose a centralized search framework that in effect performs such translation, but in fact teaches away from such centralized search framework and to what is effectively a decentralized translation process. In fact, Kan does not at all disclose or even suggest the use of a ubiquitous or common format for a search method or for a format for search results, as is required by the claims of the present application. Instead, the interface 122 of each Kan provider can be expected to handle queries in multiple formats for search methods and search results.

At any rate, the non-interposed Kan resolver does not respond to a call from the Kan hub by performing a search on each selected search provider, inasmuch as the Kan hub forwards searches directly, and is not disclosed as receiving a search result from the selected search provider in a response format corresponding to said selected search provider, and does not provide the received search result to the hub in a ubiquitous format, inasmuch as the Kan hub receives the search results directly without the use of the Kan resolver.

Thus, inasmuch as the Kan resolver does not provide all the functions of the search framework as recited in the claims of the present application, and no other interposed element provides such functions, Applicants respectfully submit that the Kan reference cannot be said to disclose all of the recited features of the claims of the present application. As a result, Applicants respectfully submit that the Kan reference does not anticipate the claims of the

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present application and accordingly Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(e) rejection.

In view of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application including claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 16 is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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